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11 August 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR: DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT : Information Concerning OSO Operations for
Release to Public Relations.

1. Attached herewith are three examples of old operations which have taken place in this Agency and are submitted on verbal request of Colonel Hanson for use as background for a public relations story.

2. It is strongly urged that public relations material for CIA release not include references which might be construed as direct or inferential information that covert operations take place within CIA. CIA responsibilities are of sufficient breadth to furnish adequate public relations material without going into the field of covert activities. The public must accept that somewhere in government there exists the mechanism for secret operations. Such operations are sensational, exciting, particularly appealing to the public and because of their very nature are read avidly, if made available. They point. The thoughtless will be highly stimulated. The thoughtful, in all likelihood, will be troubled. Which group do we wish to appeal to?

3. The difficulties of our relationships with the FBI can be partially traced to their sense of insecurity in dealing with us. Releases of the nature contemplated will tend to increase the lack of confidence in us rather than promote it.

4. The importance of public support is fully realized but it is believed that such support can be obtained without including references to secret operations. Such operations point at methods, techniques and certain intelligence that is available to us. They also point at certain

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weaknesses and certain strengths which in the hands of the enemy are of definite value to his intelligence services. Even the American public is not so naive as to fail to recognize that somewhere in the government service there is a secret intelligence. The mere fact that they know nothing about it should strengthen their support. The veiled references and hazards of contemporary commentators should add to the public sense of pride and confidence in a service that is secret.

5. It is suggested that policy be established within CIA that informational releases will not include reference to covert operations.

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Assistant Director
Special Operations

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